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ABSTRACT

New Jersey's community colleges started in the late 1960s in the more populous, relatively well-financed counties. Of the original group of faculty members, many were drawn from high schools with several years of teaching experience, others had practical business experience in their field of expertise, and still others were recruited out of graduate schools. Each college must decide for itself what to do about the fact that its faculty is growing older and will be retiring within a few years. Options include recruiting business people who have opted for early retirement or older professors from the university; instituting phased retirement programs whereby faculty teach less and are paid less; offering generous buyouts to encourage early retirement; and hiring novice teachers and teaching them to teach effectively. In order to increase the pool of new talent, recruiters will have to go to other English-speaking countries (e.g., Ireland and possibly Canada) and utilize their surplus of graduate students. The problem of incremental aging of the faculty can be looked at in terms of physical manifestations (e.g., faculty who can no longer walk up stairs with ease) and intangible manifestations (e.g., faculty who are losing the inner motivation to teach). Colleges must take action to deal with both types of difficulties. (AYC)

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POLICY ISSUES AT THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE:

ESSAYS BY FELLOWS

IN THE MID-CAREER FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

AT PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

MAY 1987

THE AGING OF THE FACULTY AT THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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BACKGROUND

Aging occurs to everyone and everything. It is a fact of being; however, what makes it unique for the community college movement in New Jersey is the number of faculty, administration buildings, and equipment growing old together. (The average age of the faculty is 47 years old.)

The community colleges started in the late nineteen sixties in the more populous, relatively well financed counties of New Jersey. New buildings were planned, old buildings converted, faculty, and staff hired. This paper will concern itself with the faculty component, the author hopes others will examine the other components. Drawing the faculty from high schools, many of the original faculty had several years of teaching experience. Another segment had practical "business experience in their field of expertise." Still others were recruited out of the graduate schools. By the year 2010 the "old-timers will have left the movement like snow birds heading south to Florida."

The individual college, when it examines the aging process must be prepared to categorize the process into terminal points (incompetent teaching) and the intermediate points (nodules) leading to the terminal point. Examples of nodules that have physical manifestations are poor physical health (resulting in "high" absenteeism), hard of hearing, and poor eyesight, while some intangible manifestations might be refusal to use modern tools, ie disk storage rather than textbooks not keeping up with current thought about subjects taught.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

What should community colleges do with an aging faculty and their loss within a few years?

ALTERNATIVE COURSES OF ACTION

1. DO NOTHING
2. TAKE ACTION

Each college has to decide for itself to take an action, as yet undetermined, or not to act and let the events take it. A college can take one of three roles 1) a change agent, channel the stream; 2) steer the boat on the stream; 3) be carried by the stream to wherever it goes (le bateau ivre). Change will occur, regardless of the action or non-action of the participants. Important in any positive alternative

chosen is the process of the selection of the choice of the alternative as well as the tactics to implement it. One of the "rules" in the Justian code--whatever touches a person that person must give approval. It can't be left to a committee to plan but must be planned by all who will be effected by the change. No one alternative will be right for all the community colleges for the strength of our community colleges lies in diversity as each one responds to its county's approach to change. Athletic teams are faced with a similar situation that of aging players and the professional players demonstrate aging for all to see. How the management of these teams handle their problems can give insight to the management aging of faculty in community colleges in New Jersey. One way they handle it is to make deals for players who have two or three years left. Another is to give their present players the opportunity to play a less rigorous position, ie. move from catcher to first base. Play less frequently is another option. While change the rules of the game must not be forgotten, the designated hitter is an example of this approach. A whole new team of young inexperienced players is the final alternative. So it is in colleges, a college can recruit from the world of business or the university by switching older professors to teaching only rather than doing research,

phased retirement by teaching less and being paid less, offering generous buyouts (changing the rules) and finally hiring novice teachers.

The college that selects this route, can look to business people who are in a state of early retirement. This can be a valuable source not only for business subjects such as accounting and marketing but for the natural sciences and some of the social sciences. In order to make the change over work for both the person recruited and the college, the college must be willing to train these people to become team mentors rather than throwing text books at them. The older University professor might want to devote his or her time to teaching and not deleve into research. A switch to the community college might be a mechanism to use. The State University might want to pursue this method to aid professors who desire this change. The community college will benefit from the interaction of university professors and community college instructors. This interaction will hopefully yield a higher level of teaching.

When the retirement wave hits the beach, a college that takes no action will be forced to ride the wave with little control over direction or speed. This alternative calls for change takers to analyze the situation quickly and implement change now. With this

alternative the fledgling teachers must be taught how to teach effectively. A program at the State's Universities or any other college or universities that feels it able to perform the task with and the educational program in the state as well as helping it to explore the question of what is effective teaching.

This task might be able to be done most effectively with a program at Rutgers, the State University or any other university that believes it can do the job and gain satisfaction for the need itself. Here the fledgling teachers will be able to learn not only the tools but the little differences that turn an average instructor into a good one. The program needs to be in place before the crush occurs in the early 21st century. If this is done the colleges that are change takers have a viable way out of their dilemma. The colleges themselves must create this facility at least three years before using it.

Another approach would be to trade all your old high salaried players for young players with the prospect of being able to play major league ball. In the scenario, community colleges will be competing with four year colleges and universities for a shrinking pool of native graduate students who prefer teaching to jobs in the private sector. In order to increase the pool of talent, recruiters will have to go to the

English speaking countries and utilize their graduate students. At the present time, there is a surplus in England and Ireland and possibly in Canada; however, how long this surplus will remain one can't tell. The trade portion might be an early retirement buyout ten years before normal retirement.

Before examining the action alternatives the college must know its élan vitale.

The President, the Board of Trustees, along with faculty must address the problem. Before the actual meeting, information on the aging problem must be transmitted to all parties, those interested in the problem, the faculty, the dean of instructors, or V.P. faculty will take an active role since it affects them directly.

Here the professional planner can aid the group by gathering the information, showing ways that change can be implemented in a non-threatening group setting. The role here is passive; it is not up to the planner to do the actual planning but merely demonstrate the planning process.

The problem of incremental aging of the faculty can be looked at arbitrarily first by examining the physical manifestation of it and then the intangible manifestations. Probably they both occur

simultaneously, but it is awkward to look at them together.

Physical manifestations, a diverse group of symptoms require a diverse group of solutions. For those who can no longer walk stairs with ease, classrooms on the ground level might be their room assignments. Those who have sight impairment should have at the least lecterns and perhaps more sophisticated means to project their notes so they can see the key points they wish to make. Fewer classes can be assigned with a concurrent reduction in pay for those who are not physically up to the rigors of teaching fifteen credits or more per term. The generation of rosters for the class can be programmed into a "role" book using a grade point analyzer. This would automate the paper work for the aging as well as the younger faculty.

For the intangible manifestation, a different cafeteria of selection will have to be set up. Sabbaticals, in-house courses, research, movement from our community college to another in the state will be vehicles to maintain the inner motivation that the teacher possess and enlarge its intensity. An instructor might pick one or several of these methods of renewal. It matters little which one is selected so

long as it achieves the goals that the instructor wishes to achieve.

RECOMMENDATION

Action must be taken; the colleges cannot be left to drift in the sea. We are working in a world of diversity(the different community colleges) and we are dealing with a diverse group of individuals.

A PROPOSED MODEL OF ACTION

Typically, the faculty will with their supervisor go over their goals and objectives and relate them with the community colleges goals. After setting down the goals agreed upon, the faculty members will pick and choose which alternative(s) will reach their goal most efficiently. Each alternative will have cost estimates attached to it while the faculty member will have a checking account he can spend on alternatives. He might want to spend all at once, trade, or defer spending part of the benefits. After committing himself to a choice(s) he an his/her supervisor will then see if the goals have been met. Failure should not be encouraged, but some failure should be expected--"Man's reach should be further than his grasp--what's a heaven for."

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